

Town of Milton
115 Federal St
Milton, DE 19968



www.ci.milton.de.us
Phone: 302-684-4110
Fax: 302-684-8999

April 1, 2013

**TOWN MANAGER REPORT
MARCH 2013**

Property Tax Appeals Granted

Numerous adjustments to land assessment values were granted by Town Council in March. In most cases, the value of the land was reduced. The adjustments established greater equity between parcels of similar size that were in similar developments. Selected parcels in Heritage Creek and Preserve on the Broadkill were affected.

Each property owner's tax bill was diminished by approximately \$45. The cumulative effect on Town of Milton property tax revenue will be a reduction of about \$4,900, though.

Referendum Language Approved

The Town Council also approved the specific language to be used on the April 13, 2013 Water System Improvements referendum. The Special Board of Elections was appointed and voting machines were contracted through the Department of Elections. Advertising in three newspapers of general circulation in the town has been scheduled. Notices have been posted and a circular will be delivered to all property owners in the coming week.

Residents of legal voting age may participate in the referendum. So may property owners – even if they are not full-time residents. Owners of multiple properties may only vote once. Properties owned by a trust or corporation may be represented by one person. Voter registration is not required, but proof of identity, residency or ownership is required.

The referendum will be conducted at Town Hall at 115 Federal Street in Milton on April 13, 2013, from 8 am until 6pm. The ballot question is whether or not to allow the Town of Milton to borrow up to \$1.725 million to finance water system improvements. These improvements include the rehabilitation of an existing well and treatment facility on the south side of the Broadkill River, the establishment of a water main loop from Wagamons West Shores to the south Federal/Chestnut Street area, updates to system control technology and the possible repair of the foundation of the water tower at Shipbuilders Village.

Cannery Village Update

A new fire hydrant was installed in Cannery Village. The location was selected with regard to the need for first responders to have optimal access to water supply in the event of a fire in the neighborhood.

Also, a Request for Proposals for street signs in Cannery Village was published in March. The deadline for submissions is April 10th. The purpose of the signs is to enhance the delivery of critical services to the residents of that community. A funding source for the signs has *not* yet been identified.

The property owner of undeveloped lots has been unresponsive to inquiries about maintenance around the dirt piles. An estimate for the cleanup of debris around the dirt piles in the development has been requested. The site may soon be cleaned by the Town – with a bill to be sent to the property owner.

Shipbuilders Village Update

A Notice to Proceed with paving activities in Shipbuilders Village was issued on March 30, 2013. Preparatory work with curbs has already been completed. It is expected that the staging of equipment will begin this week (April 1). The project should be completed by April 28th.

The Milton Town Council has not made a decision to move forward with the purchase of the Shipbuilders Village Community Center and the adjacent lots. Consequently, the owner has been notified of a need to maintain the area during the upcoming growing season.

St. Patrick's Day Parade a Big Success!

Thanks to Irish Eyes, the Milton Fire Department and the Police Department for a well-organized and very successful parade! The weather was great and all had a good time. Participants in the race and parade also helped to raise a significant amount of funds for some very worthy local causes, too.

Check out the Town of Milton web site for numerous pictures of this festive event!

A Better Accounting of Water Use

The installation of check valves and more accurate meters at the point of production is already making an impact on our record-keeping. The meter at the treatment plant (where all well water is pumped) was registering 8,000 gallons per day *more* than was actually being pumped at the wells on a recent low-demand day. An upgrade to this meter (in the treatment plant) may be completed by the time that you read this report.

The effect of more accurate metering at the point of production will have a greater value, in terms of gallons, during a high demand period. The estimated reduction in our accounting of water being pumped during this low demand period is *more than a million gallons per quarter*, though.

A loss rate of 15% is the high threshold of acceptance for local water utilities. In 2011, the Town of Milton had an un-accounted (production versus billing) rate of approximately 30%. The number of gallons per quarter varied, but it averaged 10 million gallons. A reduction to 5 million gallons would constitute a successful program.

The following is a re-cap of our efforts to reduce the “un-accounted” water in the Town of Milton:

- 1) Leak testing of mains – no leaks found in six miles of leak testing;
- 2) Accounting for loss events – recovered amount varies, the adoption of this “best practice” will help to account for about 1.5 million of the 5 million gallons per quarter being sought;
- 3) Increased accuracy of metering at the point of consumption – meter installations at businesses and homes increased from 90% to 98%. This increased the amount of metered water by approximately 1 million gallons per quarter, too;
- 4) Increased accuracy at the point of production – check valve and meter upgrades at the wells and treatment plant are estimated to decrease the reported pumping by more than 1 million gallons per quarter. This decrease in reported production also decreases the accounting gap.

The combined effect of these efforts brings the Town of Milton very close to the goal of having no more than fifteen percent of its water not accounted. Soon, though, attention will be placed upon personal use. Delaware has a water conservation standard. The standard was created to ensure that our water table can be re-charged as quickly as it is being used. A depleted water table can have negative consequences in many ways. The appearance of giant sink holes in Florida is one outcome of water table depletion. This scenario is highly unlikely in Delaware. But conservation of this valuable resource is very important. It all begins with our daily habits around the home. So, please use water wisely.